

Michael K. Powell
Chairman Federal Communications Commission
at the
Federal Rural Wireless Outreach Initiative
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INTRODUCTION

Good morning. It is with great pleasure that I welcome each of you and thank you for participating in the kickoff of the Federal Rural Wireless Outreach Initiative.

This is the first in a series of events to 1) promote the exchange of information regarding rural development and telecommunications access and 2) encourage a greater deployment of wireless services.

The expertise that each of you bring can make this Initiative a success story of how agencies, industry and rural communities can work together to enhance the rate of economic development and growth throughout rural America.

I would like to first acknowledge the work of the key participants and staff who have put this program together.

From the U.S. Department of Agriculture, I want to thank Hilda Gay Legg, Administrator of the Rural Development Rural Utilities Service and Roberta Purcell, Assistant Administrator of the Rural Development Telecommunications Programs.

We are pleased to announce the partnership between the Federal Communications Commission and the U.S. Department of Agriculture and anticipate that it will be the first of many partnerships between our agencies.

It is through this Initiative that the USDA Rural Utilities Service and the FCC are able to jointly review their respective programs and regulatory structures so that they might coordinate activities and therefore expedite the build-out of wireless communications throughout the nation. We look forward to your participation in this Federal Rural Wireless Outreach Initiative, which is focused on the following four goals:

Goal 1. Exchange information about products and services each agency offers to promote the expansion of telecommunications services in rural America.

Goal 2. Harmonize our rules, regulations and processes whenever possible to maximize the benefits for rural America.

Goal 3. Educate our partners and other agencies about our offerings.

We have already begun this effort by launching a joint federal rural wireless outreach website that specifically provides information addressing rural needs, and

Goal 4. Expand our partnership, to the extent that it is mutually beneficial, to other agencies and partners.

This event provides an open forum in which to discuss programs and opinions. We look forward to developing our partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and making this Initiative a success; expanding the partnership to include other agencies; coordinating with industry; and providing information and programs to rural communities.

Your participation and contributions to this Initiative can make a major difference in the economic development of this nation. By becoming familiar with our respective programs, each of us will be able to more successfully achieve our goals.

I wish you success as you take this opportunity to synchronize the way agencies, industry and rural communities work together to provide information to local and regional audiences with the purpose of encouraging a greater deployment of wireless services, and thus enhancing the rate of economic development throughout rural America.

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